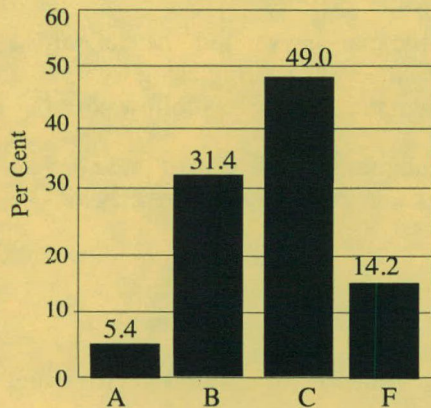


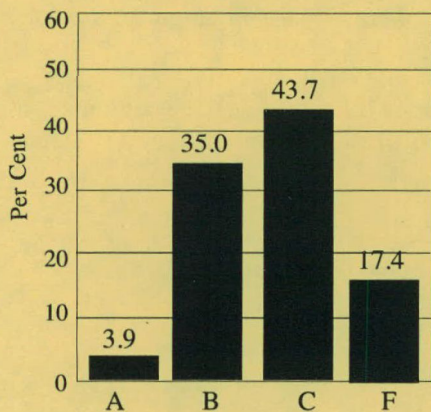
English 33

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for June 1993

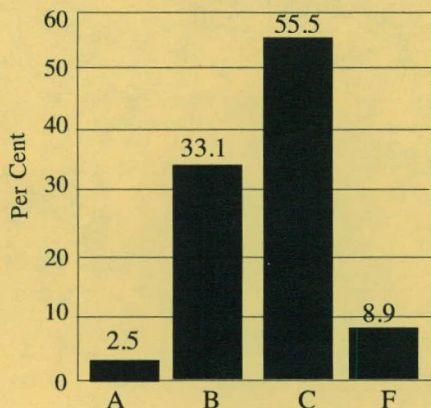
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the June 1993 administration of the English 33 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 33 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each section is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

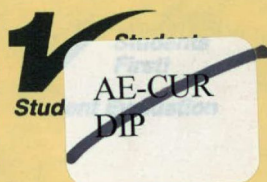
The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 5 375 students who wrote the June 1993 examination.

- 91.1% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 2.5% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Generally, student achievement in relation to standards in English 33 was acceptable, although it decreased somewhat from previous administrations. The proportion of students achieving the acceptable standard was similar to the proportion in June 1992 but slightly lower than the proportion in January 1993. The proportion of students achieving the standard of excellence was lower than it was in June 1992 and January 1993. This reduction in the proportion of students at the standard of excellence may be the result, in part, of the increase in standards on Part A for *Matters of Convention* (see page 2).

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 60.2%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 60.5%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 60.8%.



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Part A: Written Response

Part A: Written Response is written at a different time from *Part B: Reading*. Students are required to complete three writing assignments, each of which assesses a variety of writing and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing the results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are in the *English 33 Diploma Examination Update for 1993*, which is available in all schools.

In January 1993, during the standards confirmation process that preceded the marking session, the standards confirmers made additions to two of the descriptors under the *Matters of Convention* scoring category for **Section I: Personal Response to Literature**. The January additions, shown in italics, are as follows:

(3) Satisfactory: This writing has occasional errors in mechanics and grammar. A few of these errors may reduce the clarity of communication; *nevertheless, the student generally demonstrates control of conventions.*

(2) Limited: This writing has frequent errors in mechanics and grammar. Many of these errors reduce the clarity of communication *and indicate that the student is not in control of conventions.*

Similar additions were made to the *Writing Skills* scoring descriptors for **Section II: Functional Writing** and **Section III: Response to Visual Communication**.

It is important to note that these additions constitute a raising of the standards for *Matters of Convention*. Beginning in January 1993, there was an increased expectation for degree of correctness in language use for students writing the English 33 Diploma Examination.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores					
			(5) Excellent	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Limited	(1) Poor	Ins*
Personal Response to Literature The student is required to read a piece of literature and to write a response from a personal perspective.	Thought and Detail	10.0	1.0	19.4	61.6	16.3	1.4	0.3
	Organization	5.0	1.1	15.7	67.9	13.8	1.1	0.3
	Matters of Choice	5.0	0.8	13.2	63.5	20.3	1.9	0.3
	Matters of Convention	5.0	0.8	11.9	52.0	31.5	3.5	0.3
Functional Writing The student is required to write a response to a particular situation (e.g., a business letter or application).	Thought and Detail	10.0	0.9	15.8	58.1	23.3	1.4	0.4
	Writing Skills	5.0	0.6	11.6	56.9	27.8	2.7	0.4
Response to Visual Communication The assignment asks the student to respond to a photograph. The student is required to write about main ideas in relation to techniques of visual communication.	Thought and Detail	5.0	0.9	11.2	54.1	30.2	2.3	1.4
	Organization	2.5	0.8	9.3	57.3	29.1	2.2	1.4
	Writing Skills	2.5	0.7	8.9	53.7	31.3	4.0	1.4

*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **(3) Satisfactory** level of performance.

Examiners' Comments

The majority of students clearly understood the requirements of all three assignments on *Part A: Written Response*.

The excerpt from Pat Conroy's novel *The Prince of Tides* that appeared in the **Personal Response to Literature** section evoked many sensitive responses related to the concept of self-worth. Many students recognized that a positive sense of self is essential in order to keep the approval or disapproval of others in perspective. They explored themes such as "Being governed by external opinion can be very destructive," "Being accepted within a group has always been a challenge for individuals," and "Even an individualist would be a fool to isolate himself from the observations of others."

Other students took opposing views, maintaining, for example, that "Conformity is the one universal protection that can shield us from the piercing words emitted around us. We, as a socially dependent species, base most of our opinions on what others think of us. This is not a flaw; this is what makes us human." Some students referred to other literature that they had studied in which a character is affected adversely because of the disapproval of others.

Some students used quotations judiciously; others, however, used quotations indiscriminately, adding length to their compositions but diminishing quality. Once again, a problem with control of conventions was evident. Some errors in writing skills and conventions may have been the result of carelessness, or a failure to proofread, rather than lack of knowledge.

On a more positive note, most students demonstrated an understanding of the elements of good organization.

Students achieving the **acceptable standard** demonstrated a clear but general understanding of the excerpt and the topic. They clearly stated their opinions which usually related to the consequences of external influences in their lives. Many students wrote about the importance of being accepted by one's peers; many wrote about personal appearance (hairstyles, make-up, the ramifications of not being able to afford the current fashions). Many students demonstrated an awareness of the destructive nature of jealousy, deploring the power of the envious women who rob Lila Wingo of her *joie de vivre* as manifested in her unique sense of style.

Students achieving the **standard of excellence** understood and responded to the subtleties of the selection, providing responses reflective of an insightful awareness of values and ideas. Most of these students asserted that the concept of self-worth is a profound issue, with parents, peers, teachers, and other significant individuals influencing our feelings about ourselves. Some students wrote that it takes many years to realize that we must be true to ourselves and let the opinions of others be just that—opinions. Several students concluded that we all must recognize the fragility of human beings, that it is our responsibility to care about the feelings of others, and that in this way we can move towards a more compassionate way of living. These students demonstrated confidence in their writing. Their compositions were well organized and were essentially free from errors. Their stylistic choices were effective and often polished.

Most students produced satisfactory work on the **Functional Writing** assignment. The June 1993 assignment required students to write a letter on behalf of Nalwen's Teen Committee to the Nalwen Town Council thanking the members for agreeing to establish a teen centre and requesting materials for the programs that the teens had proposed.

Most students used a courteous tone; in some instances, the tone was less formal than in previous functional writing assignments, perhaps because a teen centre would be close to the hearts of many adolescent writers.

Most students handled organization without difficulty.

Weakness in conventions, however, was evident.

To achieve the acceptable standard, students were expected to provide a statement of purpose, an identification of activities and materials, and a closure to their letter.

Students achieving the **acceptable standard** generally sustained an awareness of audience and provided information sufficient to fulfil their purpose. Students achieving the **standard of excellence** provided specific and credible details, sustained an awareness of audience throughout their papers, and developed a mature understanding of the diverse interests and needs of adolescents.

The photograph in the **Response to Visual Communication** section was the second colored photograph to be used on an English 33 diploma examination. Markers, acknowledging the keen interest of many of their students in the preservation of the environment, felt that this photograph of the Docklands in London was a laudable choice. In the foreground of the photograph is a lush green garden with many beautiful, well-cared-for flowers. The white-haired man who tends the garden appears relaxed as he trims the hedges. His dog strolls nearby. In juxtaposition to this warm, inviting garden, a busy construction site (unfinished high-rise buildings, concrete walls, structural steel reinforcements, overhead construction cranes) rises in the background.

Most students were able to respond to the photograph and various interpretations were provided. Students achieving the **acceptable standard** tended to interpret the photograph in a conventional way using generalized support. Many such students discussed the contrasts in the photograph (city and country, nature and technology, present and future). Some of the less successful students provided a generalization based on the photograph, with no details; others provided speculative ideas not supported by the photograph.

Students achieving the **standard of excellence** presented insightful interpretations of the photograph, and demonstrated the ability to draw parallels and make connections. These students used purposefully chosen details to support their generalizations and used effective words and structures; they discussed photographic choices such as color, texture, and juxtaposition in an articulate manner. They provided generalizations such as "Amid the chaos of our busy world we can benefit from time spent in our special retreats" and "In a place where cold steel dominates the skyline and man-made boxes steal beauty from the land, one man decides to rebel." Some students discussed eloquently the photographer's attempt to warn the viewers of future trends. Others viewed the photograph as less menacing, suggesting that if we all care about our private environments, we can make a difference to our planet's preservation.

This assignment requires a sustained response and, once again, it is gratifying to note that there were very few brief responses.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	62.1
2	D	78.4
3	A	68.6
4	A	41.5
5	D	65.7
6	C	36.3
7	D	82.1
8	A	75.4
9	C	71.9
10	A	83.0
11	B	61.4
12	C	40.0
13	B	55.2
14	B	46.9
15	C	68.4
16	B	83.7
17	A	47.8
18	D	54.0
19	D	73.3
20	B	68.2
21	A	73.2
22	D	74.0
23	D	77.5
24	B	82.7
25	A	51.3
26	A	73.7
27	C	82.4
28	C	47.3
29	B	58.3
30	A	56.4
31	C	38.8
32	A	66.5
33	C	65.5
34	C	64.5
35	C	77.2
36	B	56.9
37	D	75.6
38	A	77.1
39	C	73.0
40	C	39.4
41	A	66.1
42	—	—
43	D	51.7
44	C	71.9
45	A	66.7
46	C	59.8
47	A	46.7
48	D	52.4
49	A	80.9
50	D	53.1
51	B	56.4
52	B	70.0
53	C	71.9
54	D	43.3
55	B	50.6
56	D	71.5
57	B	69.3
58	C	78.0
59	B	67.4
60	B	68.3
61	D	51.7
62	A	68.1
63	D	55.8
64	A	54.5
65	D	65.5
66	D	65.4
67	B	55.8
68	C	48.4
69	C	52.6
70	B	57.3

*Difficulty — percentage of students answering the question correctly.

Part B: Reading

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. From this table, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students relative to the province as a whole and, consequently, areas of strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks*, one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1993 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			Total
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Main Ideas/Details	19, 20, 68, 69	2, 7, 9, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 41, 44, 45, 50, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61, 65	4, 26, 34, 56, 62, 66, 67	30 Items (22%)
Relationship between Form and Content	15, 47	1, 6, 11, 23, 25, 36, 38, 43, 49, 53, 58, 63, 64	10	16 Items (11%)
Human Experience and Values		3, 5, 8, 35, 37, 39, 40, 42*, 46, 52, 70	12, 13, 14, 48, 51, 55	17 Items (12%)
Knowledge of Revision and Editing	28	27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33		7 Items (5%)
Total	7 Items (5%)	49 Items (35%)	14 Items (10%)	70 Items (50%)

* Question 42 was dropped from the examination before mark calculations were made. The total mark possible, therefore, was 69.

Subtest Results**

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 43.5 out of 69

Course Content

- Main Ideas/Details: 19.5 out of 30
- Relationship between Form and Content: 10.1 out of 16
- Human Experience and Values: 9.6 out of 16
- Knowledge of Revision and Editing: 4.2 out of 7

** Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

Examiners' Comments

Standards

During the marking session a committee of ten classroom teachers of English 33 reviewed Part B to determine whether the standards embedded in the readings and questions were appropriate and fair. The committee members generally concurred that the examination set an appropriately demanding standard of achievement for graduating English 33 students. They found the reading selections relevant and engaging and the questions challenging but fair.

Deleted Question

Some teachers felt that Question 42, particularly in view of the subtleties in the text of the selection, was very difficult. These concerns were borne out by the results: question analysis indicated that more students chose D, an incorrect alternative, than B, the keyed response. The decision was made to delete Question 42 from the examination because it was clearly too difficult for English 33 students.

Detailed Discussion

The following table gives results for five multiple-choice questions. For each question, statistics are given for three student groups. The comments following the table discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

**Percentage of Students Correctly Answering
Selected Multiple-Choice Questions**

	Question Number				
	11	12	14	24	28
All Students	61.4	40.0	46.9	82.7	47.3
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	93.8	66.3	51.4	97.6	59.6
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	55.4	34.4	46.8	82.4	46.4

Questions 11, 12, and 14 were three of a set of nine questions based on an excerpt from Arthur Miller's play, *All My Sons*. The nine questions had a range of difficulty from 36.3 (Question 6) to 83.0 (Question 10) and are representative of the kind of question set that appears on an English 33 diploma examination.

-
11. In her heart, Mrs. Keller has conflicting feelings about Annie. This conflict is shown in the discrepancy between the statement "But I'll always love that girl" (line 22) and the statement

- A. "She's one that didn't jump into bed with somebody else as soon as it happened with her fella" (lines 22-23)
 - B. "Nobody comes seven hundred miles 'just to see'" (line 83)
 - C. "Probably a hundred people told her she's foolish, but she's waited" (lines 98-99)
 - D. "She's faithful as a rock" (line 101)
-

12. The statement that MOST CLEARLY shows Mrs. Keller's despair is

- A. "The tree snapped right in front of me" (line 54)
 - B. "I won't stand for any nonsense" (lines 108-109)
 - C. "I can't stand all alone" (line 117)
 - D. "Just don't stop believing" (line 124)
-

14. In the excerpt, Mr. Keller's attitude toward his wife can BEST be described as one of

- A. skepticism
 - B. frustration
 - C. apathy
 - D. anger
-

While some of the teachers who reviewed the examination felt that

Question 11 was an excellent question, others were concerned that the word "discrepancy" would be outside the vocabulary of many English 33 students. However, the question was not overly difficult. It appears that many students either knew the meaning of "discrepancy" or were able to ascertain Mrs. Keller's "conflicting feelings" about Annie; 61.4% of all students answered the question correctly. This number included 93.8% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence and 55.4% of the students who received marks between 50% and 64%. Only 27.1% of the students who failed the examination answered the question correctly.

Question 12 required students to select the statement that **most clearly** shows Mrs. Keller's despair. This question was challenging in that it required students to select a **best** answer from four alternatives, all of which contained some measure of correctness. The question was difficult with only 40% of all students choosing the keyed response. Alternative C, the keyed response, "I can't stand all alone" **most clearly** shows Mrs. Keller's despair. In this poignant assertion she acknowledges her own needs, her vulnerability, her despair. 66.3% of the students achieving the standard of excellence and 34.4% of the students who received marks between 50% and 64% chose the keyed response.

The question was highly discriminating, however, and correlated well with the examination as a whole. Of the students who received marks between 50% and 64%, 47.1% chose the incorrect alternative D, while only 27% of the students achieving 80% or higher chose D.

Question 14 asked students to use their powers of judgment to select the response that indicated, **most strongly**, Mr. Keller's attitude toward his wife. The results for this question were disappointing with only 46.9% of the students choosing the keyed response (51.4% of the students achieving the standard of excellence and 46.8% of the students who received marks between 50% and 64%).

Some teachers observed that the word "apathy" may not be in the lexicon of all English 33 students and that some may have chosen it because it was unfamiliar and, therefore, seemed to be the best answer (alternative C was chosen by 35.1% of all students achieving the standard of excellence and by 32.9% of the students who received marks between 50% and 64%). Or, it may be that students who did not know the meaning of the word "apathy" confused it with the word "sympathy."

It is also possible that many students did not re-read the short drama selection (with particular attention to Mr. Keller's speeches and stage directions) and therefore chose the incorrect response.

24. In lines 241 to 247, the writer concludes that future electronic gadgets may be

- A. less complex
 - B. more complex
 - C. accessible to everyone
 - D. more difficult to produce
-

Question 24 was one of a set of 12 questions based on the article "The Right Button" that was taken from *Newsweek* magazine.

Question 24 was a very easy question, with most of the students (82.7%) choosing the keyed response. This number included 97.6% of students who achieved the standard of excellence and 82.4% of students who received marks between 50% and 64%. Even 60.7% of the students who failed the examination answered this question correctly.

This question required that students re-read lines 241 to 247 in order to choose the correct response. It is gratifying that most students appeared to have taken the time to re-read these lines, indicating once again that students who verify the text carefully are usually successful.

28. In the first part of paragraph 2, Robin revises the sentence structure in order to correct a

- A. shift in tense
 - B. comma splice
 - C. run-on sentence
 - D. sentence fragment
-

Question 28 was one of a set of seven questions dealing with revision and editing skills.

Question 28. The teachers who reviewed the examination felt that Question 28 was challenging but fair. The results, however, were disappointing. This question proved to be difficult; only 47.3% of all students answered correctly (59.6% of the students achieving the standard of excellence and 46.4% of the students achieving marks between 50% and 64%).

It is interesting to note that 38.5% of the students achieving the standard of excellence chose alternative A. One can only speculate that many students may have considered the change in pronoun, from second person to first person, a shift in tense.

The teachers who reviewed Part B confirmed the curricular validity of this question. They were pleased to see the inclusion of a sentence structure question on the examination, noting that errors of syntax continue to be a major problem in student writing.

For further information, contact Tom Dunn, Gloria Malick, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 427-0010.